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place where he is not likely to be disturbed, and addresses the supreme god in a loud tone of voice, requesting his assistance. [782]

Although prayers can be said at any time of the day, or at any season of the year, there are occasions when they are more potent than at other times. At dawn, for example, a wise young man is accustomed to go alone to the river to wash and pray. He enters the icy water, blows mucus over his hands, and rubs his body vigorously[a] either with a smooth pebble, or, if it can be obtained, with a stone taken from the stomach of a sea-lion.[b] As he scours himself, he asks *Mesakais* to grant him long life, power, success, and strength. On coming from the water, he repeats his request, and then washes himself again. This process is repeated four times, making eight prayers in all. A young man who does this habitually, and in other ways placates the supreme deity, is likely to have success, and may even be given supernatural assistance by one of the many anthropomorphic or nonmorphic creatures. The underlying belief is that *Alpuxtēw* actually hears the words spoken and, pleased thereby, aids the petitioner either directly, or by strengthening the supernatural elements in his body. [783]

Mesakais has power over both rain and dry weather, and is petitioned for whichever is desired. When the sun is obscured by rain clouds, the Bella Coola pray: [821]

"Please clean your face, *Mesakais*," or,

"Please show us your face, we need you."

Before a man starts on a journey, either by canoe or on foot, he always asks help for his undertaking. [484]

"*Mesakais*," he prays, "Be with me," or "Go before me," or, "Give me what I want."

Corresponding to the importance of the occasion, prayers are always made before the departure of a hunting or war [824] [834] [835] [515] [296] [823] [825]

[a] Urine was formerly used for washing both the body and clothing. It was [illegible] washing purely for cleanliness was not habitual until recently.

[b] The Bella Coola state that stones are often found in the stomachs of sea-lions. One specimen, considered of great value, was seen; it was indistinguishable from a water-smoothed river pebble.

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who, in turn, would pass on the request so that it might reach each member of the party. Not only is it contrary to custom for a commoner to hold intercourse with a chief's wife, but it is unknown for a man to ask another to sleep with his wife, so the youth was surprised and rather frightened. However, he acceded to the request, passed on the instructions, and washed. As he was bathing, a seal appeared in the surf beside him, and he was able to kill it easily. Each in turn behaved in the same manner, washed, and then killed a seal. Next morning, when the chief returned he was delighted that all had turned out in accordance with his hopes. At the same time the wind dropped so that the party was able to return home.

The power which had brought the seals within reach of the men had been engendered in their own bodies by these ritual acts after a rather lengthy period of continence. The Bella Coola believe that such a procedure always increases their strength and ability, therefore giving them a better chance to gain favour from supernatural beings, and to take advantage of opportunities offered. Hunters in particular are careful with regard to their marital life since animals know their acts and thoughts, and hide from one who has not made himself "clean" by continence, its termination, and bathing. *Sxetsta* consists of these three elements, but since continence is the most prominent feature, the term may be translated as "ceremonial chastity."

In its simplest form this comprises merely the three elements already mentioned. The longer the continence, the greater the power engendered by its termination. A man who has practised abstinence for a year has such strength within himself that almost any good fortune may occur, and cases are known in which it has been carried out for even longer periods. More often, an individual practises ceremonial chastity in accordance with a family tradition. One old man gave the following recipe and was most emphatic that it always brought success in hunting and fishing; he added that on the two occasions he had tried it, he had brought back a phenomenal number of skins.

A person planning to set out on an expedition for any pur-

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pose should remain continent for several nights to increase his generative powers. He then selects a time for beginning the rite and on the second and fourth nights from that date sleeps with his wife, holding intercourse repeatedly and vigorously until he is utterly exhausted. Before dawn on the third and fifth days he must wash in the river or in some quiet stream. Then follow four nights of restraint, a further intercourse, and washing before dawn. The period is next increased to eight nights, then twelve, and finally sixteen, each with a similar contact and bathing. The nights of abstinence are thus forty in all, a lucky number. An unmarried man can obtain power in the same manner with the assistance of a female friend; it is the act itself that is vital, not the union of husband and wife.

At the present time, only two Bella Coola are said to know this particular type of ceremonial chastity, which they conceal carefully, even refusing offers to buy their knowledge. It is potent at any time, but especially if the periods of continence have been so arranged that they terminate at one of the solstices. Then, indeed, can a hunter set off with every prospect of success, knowing that the human taint disliked by animals has been removed, and been replaced by a ceremonial cleanliness pleasing to them. If the time terminates at the winter solstice, the hunter should set out immediately; if it ends in June, he must remain away from women after his final intercourse. In September or October, when ready to leave for the hunt, he must sleep beside his wife for the last four nights; each night he must place his leg between hers, and each morning the two must wash together. The best fortune of all is obtained by a man who observes this forty-night period for four successive years.

Another, and more common, count[a] is to observe continence for four nights, followed by intercourse. Immediately afterwards, the man should eat as much devil's club[b] as pos-

[a] The record of nights is kept by notches cut in a stick or by knots on a cord.
[b] Or false hellebore. This latter plant is thought to be so poisonous that the tasting of even a twig an inch in length is fatal; a very small amount, however, all that is ever taken, acts as a powerful emetic.

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224 sible, selecting small twigs from which the bark and spines
785 have been rubbed off. This acts as an emetic, so that before
[824] washing in the morning he has vomited from his stomach all
278 polluting matter, especially any human hair which animals
[789] consider particularly unclean. Before dawn he goes to the river and remains beneath the surface as long as possible, irrespective of the coldness of the water. Then he returns slowly to his house. Four nights later the same acts are repeated. These eight nights of continence are followed by two further periods, each of four nights, making a total of sixteen. Thus fortified, a hunter anticipates great success.

985 A person practising ceremonial chastity is in a condition peculiarly susceptible to disaster, and must observe certain restrictions. If, for example, anyone sees him as he returns from washing in the morning, the power which he has been accumulating so laboriously is lost. Owing to this belief, it is customary for a man to wash long before dawn and to come creeping into his house through a hole in the floor. He must always be the last to retire at night, the first to rise in the morning; and he must say nothing about what he is doing. Intercourse is, of course, absolutely forbidden except on the proper nights, and at other times he must not even put his arm around his wife.
[837] Failure to obey these restrictions destroys any advantage from ceremonial chastity, while actual disaster follows should a man's wife misconduct herself with anyone else when he is using her for this purpose. If she is unfaithful, her husband is certain to be slain by an animal when hunting, or to slip and be killed on a mountain trail. Animals know all that human beings do or think, and they punish anyone who is unable to perform ceremonial chastity fittingly. Behind these restrictions there
[825] is undoubtedly the sentiment that intercourse, held duly and
851 properly at the right time, is not a mere desire of the flesh, but
785 a ceremonial act. Indeed, when the Bella Coola speak of it in
[833] connection with ceremonial chastity, they do not use the
[195] common term, *c·m*, which has a coarse implication, but *sulqlut* which has a polite and almost sacred implication.

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Ceremonial chastity is considered almost a necessity to hunters, and in former years a man would rarely, if ever, set out to seek game without fortifying himself by at least several days of continence followed by washing. In the few cases known of a female assuming the clothing and activities of a male, she has been forced to hire a man to sleep with her on the proper eighth before starting to hunt. But hunters are by no means the only ones to observe ceremonial chastity. If a man wants to build a salmon-weir, it is by this means that he makes himself strong enough to succeed; if he plays cards, good fortune is sought in the same fashion. The guests at a potlatch observe ceremonial chastity so that their host may not forget them in his distribution of presents, the host, that his guests may arrive on time. The *hactcr* dancer thus fortifies himself for the performance of a dangerous ritual. In this way a man experiences dreams foretelling the future. In every desire or activity of life, ceremonial chastity is a potent means of success, not infallible, usually combined with prayer and in many cases with sacrifice, but a background and accompaniment to every means of propitiation. If a man has conspicuous ill-luck, it is because he has failed to observe ceremonial chastity; if he succeeds, it is because he has done so. At the present time there is living in the Bella Coola valley an old white man who for years has ranged the mountains in search of gold; he has been unsuccessful, and the Bella Coola believe that he will never succeed until he observes ceremonial chastity.

The strength which a man may acquire through the practice of this rite is almost limitless. A man may be ailing on account of the leaving of his tally post, but, if he scrupulously and faithfully observes chastity, it will become straightened, whether automatically or through the agency of *Hqaoaitx* is uncertain. After the termination of a long period of continence, a man's spirit is so strong that his friends place their hands on the back of his neck in order to absorb some of the power radiating from his spirit. Ancient myths record how the more force engendered in a man's body by lengthy chastity

once was enough to kill an enemy, as if his spirit had been driven from his body by a sudden start. Even in recent times it is said that individuals who have observed ceremonial chastity have been able to perform miraculous feats. A few years ago a Bella Bella man lost two sons and was trying to get enough money to buy a tombstone for them. With this in view, he observed chastity for almost a year. Then he went and hunting, and had killed a large number of the animals when, standing up in his boat, the oar blew against him so that he was thrown overboard. But he was so strong that he simply walked on the surface of the water and recovered his boat, none the worse for his mishap. The man who cited this instance stated that a number of Bella Bella had seen the occurrence and could vouch for it.

Ceremonial chastity is not a matter about which the Bella Coola are willing to talk. It concerns both their religious and family life, in neither of which are strangers welcome. But when an investigator becomes on friendly terms, and gains some understanding of the inner lives of the people, he begins to realize its importance. Ceremonial chastity is not only potent in itself, but it is also the favourite means by which a man can choose himself of the supervision of human misdeeds so that he finds favour with the supernatural.

friends, a further cause for their preferential treatment. A Bella Coola who had been ordered and consented had to undergo a cleansing ceremony to remove the taint of slavery before he could take part in the ceremonies of the community. It was impossible to learn the details of this rite.

A master had complete power over a slave, unaffected by the force of public opinion, since the affairs of a slave, being without relatives, were of no consequence to anyone. Accordingly, the lot of a slave depended on the character of his master, and on his own ability and industry. An industrious slave was valued, such as one would not be traded or will except through dire necessity, and in course of years he became, so far as actual treatment was concerned, one of the family. Many masters gave their slaves facial[a] dance prerogatives, expending large sums for the purpose. In such a case the slave might become an influential member of the community, though the fact that he was not free was never forgotten. On the other hand, a master had not the slightest compunction about beating a lazy slave, and could kill him if he so desired. None of the present Bella Coola has heard of such a case; it was considered more sensible to sell or give away an unsatisfactory slave. It was accepted as a matter of course that a master should provide his slaves with food and clothing, since anything produced or obtained by one belonged to him. A slave-owner had full rights to his female slaves, and consequentially exercised them. The only restraints were the jealousy of his own wife, or wives, and the feeling that it was undignified for a free man to debase himself. It was impossible to learn with even approximate accuracy to what extent intercourse took place between masters and slaves. Probably not a great deal, though there was considerable freedom of relations between slave women and the young men of the community, unrestrained by the pride of chieftainship. When a slave had been faithful for a number of years and had become almost a member of the family, his master would try

[a] [illegible] MS was now made given.

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There now remains only the necessity of removing from the house itself the supernatural power with which it is firmly believed to have been impregnated throughout the many weeks of the ceremony. Should this not be done, it would be so strong that only *xaisla* could thenceforth live in it, and no *hamat'sa* rite could be performed therein. One of the senior chiefs, acting on X's behalf, requests as many *xiki* as are present to go to the back-room. At the same time a drum is beaten slowly. The *xiki* all sing loudly, in unison, *hoip* four times. The whistles sound from the back-room with ever-increasing intensity, as if the supernatural being, whose voice they are, were going away. It is said that this practice has been comparatively recently adopted from Rivers Inlet: there used to be nothing of the kind. The *xiki* re-emerge, and one of them crawls behind the fire with his stick which he beats on the floor and calls on the audience to shout with him, "hi . . ." This is done four times. It serves to purify the house from the supernatural power with which it has been saturated. The people then disperse, without food.

Goods from the general store are reserved to pay these men for their services, and also for cleansing the initiates from the power with which they have been imbued, a rite that takes place the following morning in the presence of several *xiki* chiefs. The initiates are brought from the back-room and seated in a close circle between the door and the fire.* A foreign *xiki* is chosen by X to perform the actual cleansing rite. He has been asked beforehand and has come provided with a long pole and some soiled clothing. It is immaterial whose this is, provided that it has been in contact with a human body, the most potent articles are ceremonial cedar-bark poles.

The *xiki* covers the young men with a large cedar-bark mat. Then he fastens the clothing or poles to his pole and holds the end to the fire until they are smouldering. Then he swings it four times over the heads of the initiates and throws the stick

*Behind the fire standing, a few informants.

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with the objects back on the fire. In some cases four sets of clothes are used. This rite, which is regarded as very important, frees the lads from the supernatural powers with which they have been endowed, and permits them finally to leave the back-room and return to normal life, just as their earlier cleansing freed them from the outsiders. During their period of seclusion no initiate can perform a *festival* ceremony of any kind. The supernatural beings of the two societies, though closely akin, are yet independent, and it would be unthinkable for a man to come into contact with the two at the same time, unless he should be the owner of a rare prerogative enabling him to do so. Only a few men have the right, which undoubtedly was derived either from the Bella Bella or the people of Rivers Inlet.

X pays the functioning *alki* with new clothing. This completes the whole ceremony. The guests either return home or adjourn to some other house where a potlatch is taking place, but no rites mark their departure.

Such, then, are the principal features of the Bella Coola potlatch. Without making a careful comparison of its features with those of neighbouring tribes, the following points stand out with great clearness:

(1) The basic concepts of the potlatch in Bella Coola are the same as those of the rite practised elsewhere on the coast.

(2) A potlatch has not the same importance in Bella Coola as it has on other parts of the coast, especially among the Kwakiutl. All informants stated repeatedly that they did not carry their potlatches to the same lengths as did the "foolish" Kwakiutl, nor were they so keen financiers. A Bella Coola would never entirely impoverish himself by lavish giving.

(3) The potlatch, though fundamentally the same as it is elsewhere on the coast, has certain rites characteristic of the locality. The central Bella Coola feature, the return of a dead ancestor, is not equally important elsewhere. It would be interesting to be able to trace the history of this. The most

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further conceptions by wriggling her body on her knuckles immediately after the delivery of a child. 842

To the Bella Coola religious concepts of birth are as important as the physiological aspects. The blood discharged at birth, and the mother from whom it has come, is *ouxic*, a word difficult to translate. It is applied to a person or thing which is taboo, and combines the significance of "uncanny," "abhorred," "to be avoided," "feared"; perhaps "unclean," in the biblical sense, is the best synonym. Essentially human, this blood is not only potent against supernatural beings, but is dangerous to man as well. For this reason a mother must never be delivered within a house. The smell of the unclean blood might kill all resident within, or at least prevent them receiving presents of any kind. Supernatural beings and inferior supernatural powers are alike repelled by it. 842 844 783

A recent mother is taboo and must exercise due precautions to prevent her harmful influence from affecting her associates, but this power is most strongly present in one who has borne twins. Even younger people, sophisticated in most matters, shudder when speaking of twins; fortunately, double births are not common. They are attributed to the entry of a salmon into the body, so that a twin is half-salmon, half-human. Occasionally a woman who is pregnant with twins discovers her condition in a dream and avoids the perils of a multiple birth by calling upon a shaman to remove the spirit from one foetus so that the infant will be born dead and deformed. If this is not done, the two infants arrive in due course, to the horror and grief of parents and relatives. Though abhorrent, no case is known of the killing of a twin at birth. 845 [825] [917] [754] [947]

Instead of the two children being brought back to the village, word is sent to the father who must join his wife in the temporary shelter in the woods where delivery took place. For one year, they must not return home, and during this period must eat no salmon. Four times during the year they must shift from one shelter to another, each built on the bank of a small creek. The mother can draw water from this stream

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the front door facing the river, but has to leave the house through the trap beneath the enclosure where she sleeps. The Bella Coola consider it unthinkable for a girl to disregard these prohibitions, but if this should happen, she would be chased home by her parents, by the Guardian of the River, or, in fact, by any elderly member of the community. The strongest reason for respecting these regulations is the belief that disobedience brings death; no one knows how it is inflicted, but a careless girl soon dies. During this period she cannot eat fresh salmon, though she is allowed them if they have been smoked for four or five days. Her every needs are brought to her in the enclosure where she is virtually a prisoner. It is true that she can leave it and wander in the woods, but her companions avoid her as being in an unclean condition of which they are afraid, and she is barred from taking part in all activities by the river which constitute so large a part of the life of the Bella Coola. A girl cannot pick berries during this time, as no more would grow in the valley which she had thus defiled; she must not touch anyone, nor allow anyone to touch her; she must not pass in front of a man; she must go to bed before everyone else in the house, and be the last to arise. The danger of breaking some taboo is so great that it is safer for a girl to remain within her enclosure where her mother, and other old women, gather to tell her the many things which it is boring for an adult woman to know. This seclusion is not pleasant, but it unquestionably serves to emphasize the importance of married life to which it is a prelude. The writer remembers an occasion when a Bella Coola family was eating very fresh salmon while one of the daughters, who had recently reached adolescence, watched anxiously. Her grandfather ran and gave the child an orange, something that in his youth little girls did not receive such distinction to enclosures their lot.

Adolescent girls wear certain distinctive articles of clothing and ornaments. The most noticeable is a skull-cap bound with grass; this is the only time in a woman's life that a hat is worn. She also wears earrings, each consisting of a small

! Life - one year after puberty - Analyst

[illegible] [illegible]

and recompense to funeral assistants is usually delivered until that time. Such was often true even in former years, although poor people used to call their fellow-villagers together for the express purpose of publicly rewarding those who had helped to bury one of their relatives. It is probable that a ceremony of this kind was of a simple type. Another expedient is, and was, to give gifts to the grave-diggers and others on any convenient ceremony, such as a son-in-law's wood dance. As frequently mentioned, when the people have been called together for a ceremony, advantage is often taken of the gathering to settle debts or to perform rites of an entirely different nature. It is probable that the summoning of guests solely to witness the payment of helpers was always unusual, as present is never known. On those occasions when a body was buried in secret after the carrying away of a dummy figure by the coast, the goods of the deceased were deposited as usual in the cemetery. Those who carried them were the ones who had performed the secret interment, and when publicly recompensed for taking articles to the grave it was possible to increase the value of the gifts as reward for the hidden rite without exposing the subterfuge.

Another type of ceremonial taking place after a funeral is the cleansing from the contamination of death of near relatives of the deceased, and of those who have handled the corpse. If spring salmon or steelhead are running, pall-bearers must not go near the river for ten days, or venery according to some informants, after taking a body to the grave. They have become tainted with ceremonial uncleanness which, if brought to the river bank, would poison the salmon. Unwillingness to become affected in this way led, on at least one occasion, to an elderly friendless slave being carried out to the cemetery by some old women who covered him with boards. The rules on grave-diggers cannot be removed, but ceremonially lapse after ten days.

The individual in greatest danger is the husband or wife whose consort has passed away. It is believed that [illegible]

comes and sits on the coffin during every [illegible], seeking further victims. Death has an [illegible] widow or widower that she or he will fall an easy prey [illegible] ceremonially purified. No special acts are carried out between interment and the burning of goods four days later, but the following four days must be spent in a small shelter of torches behind the village, hidden from sight in the forest. Within this the man or woman lies on the ground with legs close together and bent at the knees, in the same position as a girl during the four days after her first menstruation. A male friend accompanies a widower; a female, a widow. This companion keeps a fire burning and administers to the comfort of the patient, for such a bereaved person is considered to be. Every evening the two return home and leave again the following morning. On one of these days, the companion enters the woods east of the village to find four spruce saplings growing within sight of each other in an east to west direction. To this place he leads the survivor on the morning after the fourth *joy of concealment** in the shelter. He bends down the top of the western sapling and ties it into a loop with a rope composed of alternate strands of dyed and undyed cedar-bark. The widower, or widow, crawls through this opening as the man ties makes a circle, sunwise, around the sapling. Passing to the next one, the same procedure is repeated, and so in succession for the third and fourth, each being left tied into loop. There are at least two variations to this rite. Instead of passing through four saplings, some individuals choose to crawl four times through a single one, with a sunwise circuit intervening in every case. If the survivor be a member of a family in which it is customary to use four saplings, and if the friend cannot find four in proper alignment, he cuts a number of spruce branches and sets them upright, butts to the ground, leaving a small hole between them. Four sets of these are arranged, as substitutes for four saplings, and the crawling through takes

*There is variation in the exact time for this rite. Some individuals practise it on the fifth day after death and omit the mating to a shelter.

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place in the manner already described. After passing through the fourth hole, or for the fourth time through the single opening, the two go to some lonely pool in the forest where the mourner washes. They light a fire and deposit on it some of his clothing, placing the rest in a stump or hollow tree. The friend always takes with him a supply of new clothing which the person being purified puts on and returns home, cleansed from the immediate taint of death.

The above rite protects widower or widow, but does not alter the fact that for one year they are ceremonially "unclean" and must obey sundry taboos. They must not go to the bank of the river, or even appear at the front door of a house facing it. To do so is displeasing to the salmon; for the same reason they cannot eat this fish unless it has been smoked. If they wish to travel on the ocean, they cannot embark at the village but must go through the woods to a point on the shore and there be picked up by the canoe. There is a regular "Widows and Widowers Rock" about a mile on either side of every village on the ocean. The one near Kimsquit is called *Xpiee'ik*, and there is thought to be blood on it. A person mourning a consort must wear a hat decorated with miniature coppers of which the buttons are bent upwards; should this be unheard, when the offender remarries, the new husband or wife will soon die.

In addition to these taboos, there are customary laws of behaviour, an infraction of which renders the offender liable to social disapproval. Widows and widowers should cut their hair short, and the former should rub ashes on the face. Sexual intercourse is prohibited to both sexes; if this rule is broken, the relatives of the deceased are insulted. Remarriage should not take place for at least a year, although among poor people it sometimes occurs after only six months, in which case all taboos and restrictions automatically cease. There is no law on this point, but it is considered fitting to allow this period to elapse. These requirements clearly indicate that leaving the mourning is not merely an individual affair, but entails social and

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"She was my daughter, I have a right to do as I like." 768

Samuel King and the others accepted the exchange as a matter of course and made no comments. Captain Schooner took no part in the burning of his daughter's goods, this being the task of those with whom she had been living, and who accordingly knew which were hers. The fire was kindled by a married daughter of Reuben Schooner, though it could have been done equally well by any woman. On the following 783 ●
morning, July 1, Samuel King went with a friend to the forest 784
and passed four times through a small spruce sapling bent over as arch. This was the last incident in the funeral rites.

Fate of the Dead

LIFE OF THE DEAD

Little need be added to the account given in vol. I, chap. 775
II of the fate of those parts of a man which go at death to *Nusmā'a*. The spirit and the life travel back the path of the deceased's ancestors from generation to generation until they reach the place where his first forefather came to earth and where his cloak, if he had worn one, feared back after his alteration to human form. When the spirit and the life of a descendant reach the spot, they change into a being having the form of the cloak, and so return to *Nusmā'a*. The spirit and the life of one who is a member of several ancestral families visit the localities where the transformations to human shape of all his ancestors occurred. The Bella Coola believe that these two elements can assume many coat forms, but they do not know whether this entails the simultaneous assumption of many shapes to comprise a composite figure, or whether the spirit and the life, which become a single entity in the case of a member of one ancestral family, become multiple for one who is a member of several. When lamenting a dead person, mention is always made of the various names which he will have visited, and the forms he will have assumed. At a memorial potlatch, the deceased may return as a hybrid, or as

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insane, a calamity unquestionably due to his recklessness in handling the earth where a supernatural one had trod.

This point illustrates the danger of near approach to a *mitopac*, a theme well exemplified in the stories in the next chapter. Such perils must be counteracted in diverse ways according to the traditions of different ancestral families. One common method is to seek a lonely spot in the woods and there hollow out a shelter beneath an overhanging rock or fallen tree-trunk where the person who has been exposed to danger must remain for four days, eating nothing and at intervals scrubbing his body with branches of devil's club, spruce, and other rough plants. These protect him from the evil effects of the monster.

Similar in function to the *mitopac*, and equally dangerous to the unwary, is the *aciuti*. The latter is supposed to have been created on this earth, at Bella Bella, in the beginning of time by Yelaimut. It was at first the curse made by this carpenter, and then turned loose by him to avenge the enormities and deeds, as it has ever since, equally at home on land and in water, and in various forms. The following is a typical description of the manner in which a *aciuti* appeared in the past.

Long ago a man was hunting in the mountains when he saw a salmon, which changed in an instant to a fish-like monstrosity with two heads but no tail. He lunged at it with his stick, and in so doing severed a slide which carried the salmon down the mountain. As this was taking place, the hunter said:

"Go down the mountain, salmon, I will get you at the bottom."

When he reached the foot of the new slide he saw the fish lying dead on the stones. He cut it up and slung it on a cedar-bark rope. Now this salmon was a *aciuti*, the first one that had ever been seen, and the hunter obtained supernatural good luck from his experience. He also took the name of *Aciuti*, a designation which has been handed down until recently.

After this adventure many people hunted for the *aciuti*, and with fair success in early days, but now it cannot be found,

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power in this way, but their type can be judged by the shamanistic performances hereafter described, many of which are believed to have been derived from them.

The members of different families have conventional various means of making a person "clean" so that a supernatural being is likely to visit him. Almost every family knows one or more of these, and an individual who shows signs of becoming a shaman will be taught how to use his family method. In conjunction with this, the seeker after power will further purify himself by abstaining from sexual intercourse, by frequent washing in hot springs, by eating small portions of the ends of snakes and the heads of toads, and by avoiding food prepared by a widow or by a girl secluded after puberty. In this way he hopes that his dreams will be fruitful, and that a vision may be granted him so he lies in the forest or his evergreen couch.

The following are some of the methods to be practised on dawn every fourth day.

(1) The seeker after power locates a small stream on either side of which there are growing two shoots of devil's club. At dawn he breaks off the four stems and strips from them the bark, which he uses to scrub himself in the cold water. As he does so he says:

"These give me power that I may see what I wish to see."

This is addressed to the plant itself, not to the supreme god. It is a request to be able to see some one of the many supernatural beings that roam the forests, but which are invisible, to appear only as animals, to all but shamans. The words are not a fixed formula, and similar ones are said in connection with each method. After washing, the seeker for power throws the bark and peeled stem into the water.

(2) Again selecting a secluded stream, the would-be shaman picks up a smooth, water-worn pebble from one side of it, and with this rubs his body, then carefully replaces it in the exact position from which he took it. He repeats the process with a second stone, crosses the stream and does likewise with two stones from the further margin.

(c) Choosing a place where two small hemlocks are growing on each side of a small stream, the maker also pares limbs down the four saplings so that their branches reach the water, and with these scours his body, the spines frequently rasping his skin. When finished, he releases the saplings, which fly back to their original position.

(d) Another method is to devour four small sections, each section longer than a match, of false hellebore root. These are drunk with cold water and cause vomiting. The use of this plant is not limited to shamans, nor is it necessary to repeat it every fourth day. Apparently, the usual purges is not used with it.

Any, or all, of these methods, especially if continued with the observance of ceremonial chastity, may purify the performer so that he will be able to see what is not overlooked to most persons. *Dzoqoxhlila* a, or one of the other supernatural beings, may grant him a revelation with shaman's power. This does not always happen, as the above means of purification are not omnipotent, but in many myths where the hero obtained supernatural power it was due to his having tried one of the above, or a similar ritual.

The most common method of becoming a shaman is through the appearance of *Dzoqoxhlila* a when a person is ill. This woman, who always wears a blanket-like cape decorated with dyed and undyed cedar-bark, is able to travel anywhere at phenomenal speed. She, or some other supernatural being, may appear to a sick person irrespective of sex, whether or not ceremonial chastity has been observed. It seems as if she took pity on the sufferer and came to bring relief. The following are typical examples:

A woman had long been crippled with rheumatism. She was so helpless and weak that she spent most of her time curled in a heap on the floor, heedless of the odors and dirt with which she was covered. Her friends keenly attended to her wants. One day she heard a thump on the roof, though no one else could hear it, no one could they hear the whistle with which

1:Mc:Dowalth E-5 (1922-1924)948
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them renders it more likely that they will grant his requests. Therefore, a shaman is usually called upon to perform the following rites:

(1) Washing the mouth of a person who has died without voiding from his body the first salmon or eulachon of the season (I, p. 436).

(2) Asking assistance for the complicated rites of the potlatch (I, p. 191).

(3) Request for assistance before starting on a journey, by pulling eagle down into the air (I, p. 106).

(4) Request for aid by means of placing food on the water and blowing eagle down into the air at Masstche Nose and Kwatsa (I, p. 109).

In fact a supplication to any supernatural being can be made with greater prospect of success by a shaman than by any other person.

The Power of Shamans

As has been said, a shaman actually has power within himself, and this is so strong that it may be a source of danger to others. If a man should pass behind one so endowed when the latter is eating, his spirit would be drawn from his body into the shaman's mouth, which would close with a click, crushing the spirit and killing the man. This is quite involuntary on the part of the shaman. It happened more than once among the early inhabitants, and since that time people have been very careful not to pass behind an eating shaman. This taboo was still in force until about 1885. A shaman, too, is said to be able to recall a spirit which has left its body, and thus caused illness. It is believed by some that shamans can see the position of a person's tally post, and so judge the length of his life. These examples show the varying beliefs of different Bella Coola concerning the powers of shamans.

But the force within the shaman is really more dangerous to its possessor than to others. As certain "useless" objects are able to subdue supernatural beings, so do these same ob-

1:Mc[illegible]wraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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jects have power over shamans. A shaman must never sleep beside his wife during her menses, must never eat food prepared by a menstruating woman, by one who has recently washed a new-born infant, by a girl during the period of seclusion following puberty, or by a widow or widower during the year that follows the death of his partner. If a shaman's nose bleeds when he is dancing it is because a menstruating woman is present in the house; he at once asks the offender to withdraw, after which the bleeding stops. Moreover, he must never cure a woman during her periods. A wise shaman practises ceremonial chastity frequently. In view of the lack of cleanliness ascribed to menstrual blood, it is perhaps surprising that a woman can become a shaman while still of child-bearing age. This is rare, and only occurs when a woman is the last survivor of a family. The Bella Coola themselves consider it to be peculiar, only explicable on the ground that anything is possible to the supernatural beings, even the disregarding of feminine "uncleanness." Usually, female shamans are past the age of child-bearing; if not, they observe absolute chastity.

Even inadvertent breaking of one of these rules causes death. This is not regarded as a punishment inflicted by *Tlitxpilitx·a*; it is merely the inevitable consequence of the supernatural power within the shaman having come in contact with what is not clean. As a shaman is considered to be immune against all ordinary ailments, his death is always attributed to the breaking of a taboo. Frequently the death of a shaman is accompanied by some convulsion of nature. One female shaman, for example, told the people of her village to keep their children within doors, since a supernatural being was coming for her. Soon it became dark; there were four loud claps of thunder, at the fourth of which she fell dead.

The following was related as an instance of the danger to a shaman of coming in contact with an unclean woman.

The son of the first man to come to earth at *Nulimc* was, like his father, named *Darkness*". One April he and his wife went upstream to *T'nemlx*, a place in the country of the Carriers where milk-weed is plen-

3:36:Dorsith E-3 (1922-1924)1948
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ubá, of which they planned to collect a supply. In the course of their journey *Dudzeeng"* saw a man who, when he drew near, turned into a piece of hanging moss. A little later he again saw a figure, but on approaching it became a tree. *Dudzeeng"* and his wife walked on and presently the former once more beheld a man; this time the apparition changed to a fir tree. It was evident to *Dudzeeng"* that a supernatural being had manifested itself to him, and he told his wife that they must return. On reaching home he related his experience and gave a shaman's dance.

From this experience he had received the power of curing. He could see disease when it was invisible to all others, and could summon it to himself, where it was harmless, thus restoring the patient to health. He made for himself a rattle, shaped like a bird; this had the ability of dancing of its own accord, and would catch people's hair in its opening and closing beak. The sick were brought to *Dudzeeng"* from all over the valley. One day he travelled by canoe down to *Lowé* where he found many of the villagers seriously ill. His arrival was quite fortuitous, for he was unaware of the epidemic that was raging. The inhabitants sought his help, as he landed and cured them. He entered the house of a woman who claimed to be ill, and took the sickness upon himself, but no sooner had he left than he fell down stricken. He determined to be taken home to his canoe, but he only lived two days after his return. The woman had been in pain from her menses; it was this that he had taken upon himself and caused his death.

In consequence of the danger attached to the vocation, many people try to avoid becoming shamans, though if *Tlúdpkilás* should appear to a man when ill, he cannot escape the power. The usual method of prevention is for a man to hold intercourse with his wife from below, so that her flesh, impure through its liability to menses, can form a barrier to the coming of supernatural power. One who wishes to escape always sleeps on the left of his wife, whereas if he is seeking shaman's power he sleeps on the right. Another method of avoidance is to use the hole in the floor which serves as exit and entrance to the house of a girl secluded following adolescence.

Since the power of a shaman is obtained by a personal experience, and lacks both form and substance, it cannot be transmitted and disappears at the owner's death. As has been

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An effort is made to straighten the limb and to place the ends of the broken bone together in their proper position. If there is considerable swelling, an incision is made to let blood escape. Hemlock gum is applied freely to the whole region to soften the wound and hold the splints in position. This penetrates the cut, if one has been made, and is believed to facilitate the knitting process. Any small sticks are used for splints.

REMEDIES FOR AILMENTS CAUSED BY SUPERNATURAL OR HUMAN BEINGS

● 778 753 Persons suffering from diseases or accidents of the types described in the previous section are not the only ones whom the Bella Coola consider to be sick. A girl at puberty, a mother who has just given birth, a man or woman whose consort has just died, has been placed in a peculiar relation to the supernatural and is in a condition identical to that of one suffering from a disease. The ritual acts prescribed at these crises of life are medicines, just as truly as an herbal potion or a curative treatment. In fact, anyone who has been in close touch with the supernatural is in a critical condition and must act circumspectly, the reason for the taboos observed by shamans.

779 [To] Hunters particularly, and others who are likely to come in contact with supernatural beings, employ a number of medicines to protect themselves or to alleviate the dangers to which they have been exposed. As already described, the most potent of these are articles which have been rendered essentially human by contact with the body. For example, an evil supernatural being such as the War-Party of the Tides can be kept at a distance by casting soiled clothing upon a fire. Even more powerful are stained cedar-bark sanitary napkins. It is remembered that when a Bella Bella lad was treated with a gull so that he could see beneath the ocean, his friends became so alarmed at his tremendous ability that they destroyed it by throwing pads of this kind on a fire built beneath the bed on which he was sleeping. The basis of this medicine is the belief

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539 754 one used by some of *Telda's* ancestors. It was brought to the ocean and thrown in.

Taboos

784 The Bella Coola regard as taboos those injunctions that are observed in the belief that their neglect would cause automatic punishment. The mechanism of enforcement is frequently not understood; it is enough to know that an unpleasant result would follow disobedience. Some taboos are in force at all times, others only during certain seasons of the year, and still others at critical periods of life. Since the psychology of such [789] beliefs is essentially magical rather than religious, they could justifiably be grouped at this point. Unfortunately, to do so would destroy the continuity of accounts of birth, adolescence, death, ceremonial chastity, and many other aspects of Bella Coola life subject to taboo. The injunctions enforced by the River Guardian, the restrictions observed by a girl after puberty, the continence required after different medicines, all are taboos, disregard of which brings certain punishment. These and many others have already been described in connection with the activities to which they pertain. It is doubtful whether the Bella Coola have a single word to describe taboos [785] in general, though they are all regarded as *xnaida*, that is, as something which is ceremonially unclean.

Scarcely to be distinguished from taboos are ceremonial errors, *yun·imut* or *hdn·imut*. Failure to give presents to heralds when a seat breaks beneath a chief or a dancer stumbles, or unnecessary activity during the year's waiting for the fruition of supernatural good fortune are ritual mistakes of this type. Neglect of such regulations brings punishment, though of a lesser kind than the breaking of taboos. If the [688] error has been in connection with a ceremony, the offence can [203] be wiped out by presents to heralds, and the terms *yun·imut* and *hdn·imut* are likewise applied to some of their prerogatives such as the ability to claim clothing during the marriage of a chief's child.

Most taboos and errors can best be described with other

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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sionally, in a half-hearted manner, but it is not unusual for a man to allow the basin of water in which he makes his ablutions to remain standing for two or three weeks. Not many years ago the Carriers taught their neighbours to make a kind of soap from the ashes of burnt cottonwood sticks thrown into water; with this clothes are washed irregularly and in most cases from sheer necessity only. In former times bathing was a semi-sacred rite, but this fell into disuse with the passing of the old religion, and the use of soap and water merely for the sake of cleanliness has not become a daily habit. The women have more vanity; the younger girls especially like to have new clothes, though they wear them carelessly, heedless of fit. An effort is often made to clean up for ceremonial dances, but it entails little more than the removal of the more obvious dirt and the putting on, over unchanged undergarments, of a sweater. Pride in personal appearance, love of tidiness, delight in a clean house, are all quite foreign to the Bella Coola.

Probably the reason for lack of comforts in the houses is simply that the people do not feel the need for them. They consider it no hardship to sit on a rickety chair, scoop up food from a common dish and, if they think of it, throw morsels down to the dog or the cat. The smell, the flies, the dirt, the chaos do not concern them. Capable of undergoing privations, hardships, and even sufferings, they think neither of the comfort of themselves nor of others. Their domestic animals are often treated abominably, not through lack of affection or cruelty, but from callousness. More than once the writer has seen a favourite dog steal a piece of food from the table. Its master, after a furious blow or kick at it, would suddenly, as if by inspiration, throw a choice bit to the animal, saying:

"Why, he must have been hungry!"

Though the Bella Coola feel a kinship with animals unknown to the white man, it is not combined with any recognition of their feelings as living creatures. There are, of course, many exceptions, but on the whole public opinion demands generosity and kindness only towards human members of the group. The moral code is not concerned with animals.

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
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go with the mother and part with the father. The decision is left to the parents and children. 586

When a person has died the corpse is washed, the face painted red, the legs are doubled up, and the arms folded over the breast. The ornamentation of the deceased is put into his case; his shirt is put on, the back part covering the breast and the front part turned backward. The body is placed in a box and the latter is either fastened on the lower branches of a tree or placed in a little house, which is set on posts, above the level of the ground. The face of the deceased is turned eastward. Part of his property and gifts from his friends are deposited near the grave. The ranks of the deceased are buried. His crest is carved on a memorial column, which also shows how many canoes, coppers, headdresses, and slaves he had given away at potlatches. These objects are painted or carved on the columns. Formerly slaves were killed at the burial of chiefs. The number of slaves killed was also indicated by so many human figures on the memorial column. After burial food for the use of the deceased is thrown into the fire. This is repeated frequently during a prolonged period after the death has occurred. Wherever the friends of the deceased partake of a meal a little food is thrown down at a place between the fire and the door, where the entrance to the lower world, the home of the dead, is believed to be.

The bed of a mourner must be protected against the ghost of the deceased. His male relatives stick a three-bush into the ground at each corner of their beds. After four days these are thrown into the water. Mourners must rise early and go into the woods, where they stick four three-bushes into the ground, at the corners of a square, in which they cleanse themselves by rubbing their bodies with cedar-branches. They also swim in ponds. After swimming they chaw four small trees and creep through the clefts, following the course of the sun. This they do on four subsequent mornings, chawing new trees every day. Meantime they cut their hair short. The hair that has been cut off is buried. If they should not observe these regulations it is believed that they would dream of the deceased. Women when mourning scratch their cheeks with shells or stones.

The mourning regulations for a widower or a widow are especially strict. For four days he (or she) must fast, and must not speak a word, else the dead wife or husband would lay a hand on the mouth of the offender, who would then die. They must not go near water, and are forbidden to catch or eat salmon for a whole year. For the same length of time they must not eat fresh herring or oolachen. Widow and widower cleanse themselves in the same way as other mourners. Their shadows are considered unlucky, and must not fall on any person.

Some time after the death of a rich or influential person his nearest relative invites the whole tribe to a potlatch. On this occasion he sings a mourning song for the deceased and gives away presents to his guests. It was explained to me that this ended the mourning, and that it was 'the same as giving away the house of the deceased.'

Religion and Shamanism.

The mythology of the Bilqula differs greatly from the mythologies of the other tribes of the North Pacific coast. It is impossible to say to